

The Library Assistant

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(SECTION OF THE LIBRARY
:: :: ASSOCIATION) :: ::

HON. EDITOR: J. F. W. BRYON
BECKENHAM PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Vol. XLIII, No. 8
October, 1950

Professionals

AN AMERICAN sports enthusiast, watching an English game of Association League football, remarked recently upon the comparative inefficiency of the players on the field; a missed penalty, feeble throw-in from the touchline, inaccurate passes and shooting, aroused his scorn. The professional player in the United States, he commented, was expected to be efficient at his job. The day of the gifted amateur, even in cricket, has declined. In libraries, as in sport, the customer pays for skill and command of a craft, and is entitled to expect it. Yet one still finds libraries which are travesties of what they should be, and is met in some with a scarcely-veiled hostility that speaks ill for the profession.

Uncertainty is the quickest breeder of unhappy relations with the public: hesitancy, unnecessary delay, incomplete service, inadequate knowledge of resources, and reluctance to make full use of them, destroy both public confidence and staff morale. These are aspects of library service which are beyond the immediate purview of the Chief, and are the responsibility of the individual assistant. The better trained the librarian, the more will he be aware of the limits of his knowledge, and of his obligation to extend them whenever opportunity offers.

He may be able to hoodwink his colleagues, or even himself: but the onlooker member of the public knows only that he came away unsatisfied, disappointed, deterred from trying again. Each such occasion is a blow to the prestige of the profession. From the members of a profession one expects reliable guidance, and a degree of infallibility: it is assumed that doctors, architects, lawyers, do not make rash decisions or snap judgments. The Fellowship is but the beginning for librarians; a changing world demands that we keep pace with it, both in our resources and in our use of them.

* * * *

On the following page we print the text of Sir Stanley Unwin's lecture at the Association's Inaugural Meeting, held at Chaucer House on 8th March, 1950. The pamphlet to which he refers in his final paragraph, *How Governments treat books*, has since been published (Allen & Unwin, 6d.), and develops the theme propounded on that occasion.

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NOTICE OF ELECTION

Nominations are invited for the following Officers and Councillors of the Association for the year 1951:—

Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, and Honorary Editor; and six nationally elected Councillors.

Nominations must be made in writing by two or more members of the Association, countersigned by the nominee, and reach me not later than 23rd October, 1950.

E. A. CLOUGH,
Honorary Secretary.

CENTRAL LIBRARY,
CHURCH STREET,
BRIGHTON, 1.

Libraries, Books and Governments*

SIR STANLEY UNWIN

ON MY return from addressing the Anglo-Netherlands Societies in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, a journey which had been preceded only a few weeks before by attendance at the cultural conference of the European Movement at Lausanne, and I observed the arrears of work which confronted me, I said to my secretary: "No more speaking engagements or articles for at least three months, please." Alas! That good resolution was broken by your honorary secretary within about 24 hours. You see—in my judgment—public librarians are the salt of the earth, and I find it impossible to decline any collective request from them, let alone one from the public librarians of the future.

Indeed, I felt proud to be given the privilege of sharing in the centenary celebrations of such an unique and far reaching event as the foundation of the public libraries.

Those responsible for the first Public Libraries Act were building even better than they could have dreamed, and it is appropriate that we should commemorate their outstanding service. As has rightly been stated, they created a democratic institution of which we can all be proud—an institution more vital to-day than ever before. There is certainly no more effective weapon in the battle against ignorance, intolerance and oppression than books, and it is your primary function as librarians to ensure their wider use. And may I emphasize that word "wider" because the concentration upon best sellers from which the American book industry (and even to

*A.A.L. Inaugural Lecture delivered at Chaucer House on 8th March, 1950.

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some extent American public libraries) are suffering so acutely to-day is a disease to be avoided at all costs.

There is much to be said for mass production, and many books that have stood the test of time lend themselves to mass production, but there is little to be said in favour of the standardization of men's minds, which is a more imminent danger than is apt to be realised.

And in this connection I sometimes wonder whether librarians are fully conscious of the magnitude of their influence. Their influence *vis-à-vis* the public is obvious, but what about their influence upon publishing policy? Miller, in his recent report upon the American Book Industry, says that it is non-existent in the States. The ordinary American publisher is no longer interested in scholarly publishing, and it may well be therefore that in future more and more scholarly books on whichever side of the Atlantic they are *written* will be printed and published over here. Whether this will happen or whether British publishers will follow their American colleagues and make "best sellers" their God, depends more upon British librarians than most of us would probably care to admit. The librarian who boasts that he seldom buys a new copy of any serious book (he relies upon review copies), but admits that he often does have to buy new copies of admittedly ephemeral and second rate stuff would in the long run, were he not happily discredited by his fellow librarians, get the kind of publishers and publications he deserves. Fortunately, more and more librarians follow the example of a distinguished librarian who said that he regarded it as his duty to buy and to buy as promptly as he can any new book which is a definite contribution to learning or literature. Such librarians are exercising a greater influence upon publishing policy than they probably realise, so narrow is the margin that makes the publication of scholarly works practicable.

But the librarian's influence goes further. He is the best trained and most knowledgeable buyer. He knows which publishers maintain a high standard, which have such a poor opinion of their own products that they "remainder" them before scarcely a year is out, and he can and doubtless does regulate his buying accordingly. The librarian can thus positively encourage the better type of publishing. Even perhaps more far reaching is the development of the juvenile departments of libraries. It is of little avail to bring children to the gateway of the garden of literature; to give them during school years fleeting glimpses of the flowers within, and thereafter to leave them on the rubbish heap outside. Fortunately, the public libraries are now, most of them, fully alive to their opportunities and responsibilities in this matter and are busily training up the readers of tomorrow whose interests (by the way) will range more widely than ever before.

Books of travel transport us to foreign lands, and foreign atmospheres, but the literature of other countries does something deeper and more revolutionary than that. It takes us right unto the hearts and minds of people who may look at life from quite a different standpoint from our own; people to whom our pet prejudices count for nothing and who therefore bring a freshness of view that may be positively disconcerting. It secures us on the intellectual plane the advantages of stereoscopic vision. For this reason

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I for one have welcomed and encouraged the translation of the best foreign books into English and have been responsible for countless English books being made available in foreign languages. There cannot, to my mind, be too much interchange of thought between the civilized communities of the world—and in this process the intelligent publisher has a big role to play—a big role, but by no means an easy one.

And this brings me to my main theme: the way governments treat books.

According to Emerson—

“In the highest civilisation, the book is still the highest delight.” But the delight shown in books by most of the governments of the world takes the peculiar form of taxing and hampering their dissemination in almost every conceivable way.

A study of the treatment accorded to books in 55 different countries recently made by the Publishers' Association has yielded startling results.

The many governments which agreed only five years ago that there should in future be no obstacles to the free flow of books, seem to have competed in creating obstacles, and whereas before the late war, thanks partly to the work of the International Publishers' Congress which consistently strove not merely to remove existing barriers, but, still more important, to prevent new ones from being erected, scarcely any country, except the United States, taxed books, to-day the majority hamper their distribution if they do not directly tax them.

Several tax them by weight, not exactly an enlightened manner of measuring their value. Others show greater ingenuity. Brazil, for example, subjects books imported into that country to about five different forms of taxation, and in case that is not sufficiently discouraging, insists upon Consular Invoices costing nearly £5, on all consignments of a value exceeding £9. If Consular Invoices are not provided, the importer is fined. But as the fine may be less than the Consular charges, it would appear that the regulations are designed to be broken rather than observed. An Anglo-Brazilian cultural convention has recently been signed. It will be interesting to see whether the Brazilian government has any real intention of implementing its provisions. Its future treatment of books will be an acid test.

Canada, which ought to be encouraging the import of British books to help to enable us to buy more Canadian produce, has an 8 per cent. sales tax from which books are not, as in Great Britain, wholly exempted. Because the tax is payable on the entry of the books, the unfortunate buyers may have to journey many miles to the nearest Customs Post Office to collect them—in itself a serious deterrent. Freedom from any moral bias is shown in the Canadian Government's care that no impediment shall be put in the way of the corruption of the Canadian mind by the pulp magazines which are notoriously pornographic; for these are admitted free of duty and free of sales tax and at a lower rate of postage.

The position in Cuba is reminiscent of the problems of school days when one was told to think of a number, double it and do all sorts of other things before achieving the result, because there are first of all two separate taxes based upon weight. When you have added these two items you add a

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surcharge of 20 per cent., and when that is done you add 9 per cent. sales tax on duty paid value.

In Finland—a country which can boast one of the finest bookshops in Europe—there is likewise a tax on a tax. A sales tax on the entry of the books and a turnover tax on the enhanced cost. The less said about the difficulties which the French importer of books has to overcome, the better. They are a disgrace to a country with a cultural tradition of such eminence.

Iceland which once boasted that it didn't, and never would, tax books, has succumbed to the complaint and there are three different percentages to add to their cost. Italy now levies a duty plus a local tax.

The case of the Philippines is unique. They allow books from the United States free entry, but tax all others 10 per cent.—not, it would appear, a kind of "discrimination" to which the United States objects.

Norway has not yet followed Britain's example in exempting books from sales tax, and even Switzerland has a Customs Tax (*Handlungs-Gebuhr*) and a turnover tax affecting books.

The export research department of the Publishers' Association has worked out the approximate revenue derived from these various forms of taxing knowledge, and the amounts are so astonishingly small that it is doubtful whether in many cases they even cover the cost of their collection.

We none of us feel much respect for men or women who regard books as being of no consequence—something with which they could quite well do without. In fact, though we may not say so, we have no little contempt for them. Ought we to respect a nation which treats books in just that fashion? Would it not be true to say that the cultural level of a people could quite properly be measured by its treatment of books? Were this the test, many important countries would indeed fare badly.

Britain would come off fairly well, because we fought and won the battle for the exemption of books from purchase tax and now have comparative freedom to import books from all but hard currency countries, and even from the U.S.A. we are entitled to import double the amount (in value) imported before the war.

But public opinion has not exerted the same pressure elsewhere. Much more can be done than is usually realised, because it is difficult to defend the taxation of knowledge or the valuing of books by their physical weight. The power of ridicule is formidable and it is time that it was more fully exerted. Governments can, and should, be made to feel ashamed of treating books as a mere commercial article of commerce without cultural significance. As I have had occasion to point out on many previous occasions, the better elements in all nations will rally to the defence of books—"the noblest of man's works"—if attention is drawn to any failure to accord to them the freedom and the status to which they are rightly entitled. We can all of us do our part in making the facts known.

At the recent Cultural Conference of the European Movement at Lausanne, the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

"That the Cultural Conference of the European Movement deplores the many kinds of obstruction and many forms of taxation set forth in the accompanying chart* which hamper the free flow of books from one

*The chart prepared by the Export Research Dept. of the Publishers' Association.

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country to another, and regards it as vital to the well-being of Europe that all such restrictions should be swept away.

"The Conference accordingly urges the European Movement to press the various European Governments to take immediate steps to remove all obstacles to the free flow of books.

"Furthermore, that the European Governments should be urged to ensure that, in the event of shortage of currency, books, in view of their vital character and the relatively small amount of money involved, should be granted priority."

But resolutions are not enough. They represent too often merely "good intentions" with which the road to hell is reported to be paved.

We must pillory and ridicule any government which cannot distinguish between books and boots and fails to accord to books the freedom of circulation they enjoyed only ten years ago, and which, incidentally, we humans lost just thirty-six years ago. Richard Cobden once said that "all things shall yield to energy," and I believe that if those of us who really love books and realise their importance, show sufficient perseverance, we shall get the barriers which impede their flow, swept away.

My time is up, and I am conscious that I have only touched the fringe of my subject. You will find more information in a pamphlet I hope to issue in about three weeks' time, entitled "How Governments Treat Books." If I have shown undue and possibly un-English enthusiasm for my self-imposed task of exposing governmental maltreatment of books, I hope you will forgive me and be inclined to say with Ecclesiastes: "I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion."

Students' Problems

A. J. WALFORD

THE JUNE EXAMINATIONS.

The hand of a number of new examiners may be traced in these, the first papers to be set under the revised syllabus. The result may be likened, in some cases, to a gust of fresh air. In the case of the Practical Classification and Cataloguing many found that the real enemy was the time factor. In the case of the Final Part 2, first paper, the restricted scope of the questions and the limited choice was a distinct shock to many. As Mr. Macdonald puts it, we now know the worst.

ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS. By R. L. Collison.

Many of the questions could be answered straight from the more general text-books, and others were simply a matter of intelligent observation. The first question of the first paper, however, raised an important issue: "The reputation, good or bad, of a library is made by the assistants at the charging desk or other place where books are issued to readers." Candidates were asked to comment on this statement: how many of them pointed out that this is a contributory but not a main factor? The reputation of a library must rest fundamentally on its book stock; the fact that its building is old and inconvenient and its staff rude and unhelpful will detract from

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its reputation but will not destroy it. For instance, in the past there have been many such libraries, but readers continued to use them. It would on the other hand be true to say that the first (and sometimes the last) impressions experienced by the reader are largely influenced by his reception at the counter, but even the most courteous of library staffs cannot make amends for an inadequate bookstock.

Q.3 in the second paper reads: "Every book in a classed library has a class mark on the spine to determine its place on the shelves. What other purposes do class marks serve in library work?" The class mark also determines its place in the hierarchy of subjects, as well as in the classified catalogue, the shelf-register and the issue records. In addition, some libraries sort their non-fiction issues by class-marks, and there is of course the point that the British National Bibliography is arranged in classified order.

The third paper asks in what manner the *Subject Index* and the *Readers' Guide* supplement each other. For one thing they have very different ranges of periodicals. Then there is the point that each quite naturally has a national bias which may give slightly more emphasis to articles of interest to its own countrymen. There is also the fact that owing to the delay in publishing the *Subject Index* (and to its being an annual) the *Readers' Guide* acts as an up-to-date supplement. The latter, of course, is also more fully indexed, and its multi-annual cumulations enable the research worker to skip the annual volumes of the *Subject Index*.

Section B of this paper has three very interesting sets of reference queries which will elicit whether the candidate has acquainted himself at first-hand with the twenty-three reference books he is supposed to know.

The fourth paper is devoted to an essay of approximately five hundred words to be written in one-and-a-half hours. "The essay is intended to discover the ability of candidates to express themselves clearly, concisely and grammatically," quotes the question paper from the syllabus, but the subjects set are truly dull, ranging from a visit to a cathedral, a castle, a railway station, an aerodrome, or a warship, to delight in poetry or the pleasures of music. One is reminded all too vividly of that prim little schoolmistress in *Our Mutual Friend*, who could always write an essay which exactly fitted a slate, beginning in the top left-hand corner and finishing in the right-hand corner at the bottom. One librarian of standing, on being shown the paper, suggested that a good substitute would be a précis of some document or report—this would at least ensure that future librarians could achieve conciseness in a more practical manner.

REGISTRATION: Classification.

An excellent paper, with at least four straight-forward questions and a generous application to most of the major schemes. "Collocation," in Q.2, may have puzzled some, but not readers of Bliss. Q.3, on the use of A-Z order of subjects, gave an opening to the student of library of Congress—and Cutter. Q.4 raised the important issue of "hospitality in array"—as opposed to "hospitality in chain"; the provision of expansion made by Library of Congress, as well as the hospitality offered by such "synthetic" schemes as the Colon and U.D.C., calls for mention.

"How would you assist children to understand the classification scheme

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used in a junior library?" (Q.5). This opens up the whole field of assistance to junior readers. The talk and demonstration provide only one approach; adequate guiding, clear and simple notices, and the willing co-operation of the assistant are no less vital because they are everyday.

Q.7 embarrassed a number of those who considered that the schedules of U.D.C. and Dewey were virtually identical: it called for a first-hand knowledge of the 1948 abridgement of U.D.C. The modification of class 9 (e.g., the use made of 93 for "History: General Questions"), sub-division of 92 and 8, the placing of Non-Naval Shipbuilding at 629.12 (instead of with 623.8), the possibilities for amalgamating classes 4 and 8—these are some of the points. "Omissions" include, presumably, the gaps at such places as 554-559, occasioned by the automatic application of U.D.C. geographical divisions to 55.

Bliss's generous provision of alternative locations was the subject of Q.8. The advantage of this provision for subjects with several affinities is obvious; again, allowance must be made for local or individual preferences (e.g., separation in detail of the pure and applied sciences). A disadvantage is loss of uniformity among users; another drawback is that the individual user may abuse the practice, creating anomalies.

It is a pity that the treatment of Language and Literature by Bliss is not so adequately treated in Phillips as it might be, but it provides our best answer to Q.9 (a). Q.9 (a) overlaps to some extent with Q.10, whereas Q.9 (b) offered considerable scope. Library of Congress's up-to-date treatment of Technology has not received anything like the recognition it deserves.

REGISTRATION: Cataloguing. By S. J. Butcher.

A very easy paper consisting of two types of questions, those testing the candidate's ability to remember text-book facts and those requiring the development of an original line of argument. The former predominate and it is fair to say that this paper was chiefly a "memory test." In an attempt to cover the syllabus adequately, the examiners divided the paper into four groups, in each of which at least one question had to be answered. This limits the scope of the candidate but does lead to a more balanced test of ability.

Q.1 A straightforward question in which some candidates suspected a trap. This is a foolish state of mind because the examiners never deliberately attempt to confuse candidates. The question calls for an enumeration of the various types of added entries in a dictionary catalogue together with a statement of the information that should be included in each entry. In addition to the more obvious subject, title and series entries consideration should be given to added entries for editors, translators, compilers and illustrators. To some extent the second part of the question is dated, since modern methods of reproducing cards entail a standard unit entry giving the same information under different headings.

Q.2 Few candidates should have had any difficulty with this question, which asks for an explanation of the significance of ten common cataloguing terms and illustrative examples. Candidates in the Entrance examination would probably have welcomed such a question.

Q.3 The old question about the catalogue's reference books crops up

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again with a request to describe and evaluate four of six well known cataloguing aids. Registration candidates should have been quite capable of describing *B.N.B.*, *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, and the *Cumulative Book Index*.

Q.4 is another familiar friend, asking for a description of three general printed library catalogues which are useful to the cataloguer. This gave the candidate plenty of scope and no doubt the British Museum Catalogue, the Glasgow classified list, and the Liverpool dictionary catalogue received well-deserved recognition.

Q.5 The first question in the paper that gives the candidates with initiative an opportunity to score. It asks for an account of how the candidate would construct a subject catalogue for a new library. Most of the material is in the introduction to Sears but enterprise and good method of presentation would gain high marks.

Q.6 is an interesting question on the forms (physical and arrangement) recommended for departmental libraries dealing with (a) Art; (b) Music; (c) Commerce and Technology, and (d) History. The physical forms of catalogues are well described in Sharp's "Cataloguing," but the method of arrangement calls for knowledge and experience of the requirements of the various departments.

Q.7 This familiar request for an account of the special problems of cataloguing maps, prints and films, is becoming a hardy "biannual."

Q.8 A really good question which calls for some original thought and comment on the part of the candidate. The extract from the McColvin report puts a finger on the topical and controversial issue of "bibliographical information versus printed cataloguing cards." The B.N.B. has proved that the distribution of bibliographical information through a central agency can be a great asset to libraries. On the other hand there are some who believe that the production of printed cards can be best undertaken on a regional, co-operative basis.

Q.9 A formal text-book question on the history and value of either Cutter's "Rules for a dictionary catalog"; or, the B.M. Code.

Q.10 is an exercise in presentation rather than knowledge. Candidates have to compile a select list of holdings directed at (a) the student of English Literature, or (b) the student of modern history. Examples of the headings to be used and the general arrangement are called for. Questions 5, 8 and 10 stand out as high-lights in this rather commonplace paper.

REGISTRATION: PRACTICAL CATALOGUING. By S. J. BUTCHER.

It is probably very old-fashioned of me, but I must admit to deriving a good deal of pleasure from the return of the practical cataloguing paper. The necessity for testing the practical ability of the candidates was frequently stressed during the controversy over the post-war syllabus. The introduction of this new paper seems to prove the point.

The amalgamation of the practical cataloguing and classification test is generally regarded as a step forward. There is no doubt that the two subjects are interdependent and it will surely be only a matter of time before the theoretical papers are treated in the same way. The new paper has, however, brought its own problems. In the days of the Intermediate

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examination it was a frequent complaint that 30 minutes was not sufficient time in which to write full entries. Now the additional task of classification has been added to the question without any corresponding increase in the allotted time.

Q.1 is a simple example of joint authorship with a straightforward subject heading. *SOUND—Recording and Reproducing* with *see also* references from *GRAMOPHONES* and *RADIO* and a *see* reference from *ACOUSTICS* should meet the requirements of the borrower.

Q.2 Some candidates may have been confused by the inclusion of the words "prepared for the Fabian Society." There is, however, no choice in the heading as the work is definitely by W. A. LEWIS. *ECONOMIC POLICY* seems to be the most suitable subject heading with necessary references as listed in Sears' *List of subject headings*.

Q.3 This book called for careful consideration and the annotation did not give very much help to the candidate. It is not apparent whether the language from which these pieces were translated was English, French or German. If the book contains examples of translation from the literatures of several countries an entirely different treatment is required.

Q.4 Main entry should be under the title and as this is synonymous with *EUROPEAN MOVEMENT*, I suggest *WESTERN UNION* would be a more suitable subject heading.

Q.5 A difficult book to catalogue fully in 30 minutes. I should make the main entry under *ECK, Heinz, and others (defendants)* with added entries under *HOFFMAN, WEISSPFENNIG, LENZ* and *SCHWENDER*. Added entries should also be made under *PELEUS TRIAL* and the editor *CAMERON, J.* Subject entry would be *WAR CRIMES—Trials*.

Q.6 Another example of joint authorship. Subject entry *VACUUM*.

REGISTRATION: Bibliography. By S. J. Butcher.

After recovering from the shock of finding the question paper headed by an algebraic collation, the candidates probably decided that this was a fair and balanced paper. It covered the syllabus adequately and gave equal opportunities to the brilliant and the painstaking student.

Q.1 *2, **6, A-Z⁶, Aa-Bb⁶, Cc⁴. This collation indicates that there are two gatherings of preliminary matter (*) in two leaves and (**) in six leaves. This is followed by the text which is made up in twenty-three gatherings in six (A-Z) and two gatherings also in six (Aa-Bb). The initial alphabet having been exhausted, a second alphabet has been brought into use by the addition of a lower case letter to the original upper case letter. The volume is completed with a gathering of four leaves (Cc). This question is not so difficult as it appears. The explanation of the collation and the need for its various parts causes little trouble and the total number of leaves is merely a matter of addition. The main point to remember is that for signatures the Latin alphabet of 23 letters was generally used. This means that i is an alternative to j, u to v, and w is omitted.

Q.2 asks for the considerations deciding the fullness of entry in a bibliographical description. This involves the purpose of the description, the type of book being described and the bibliographic means. The second part of the question calls for a specimen entry which contains all the elements

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of a short standard description. For a description to be standard, three copies of the same work should have been examined and found identical. The short standard description is given full treatment in Esdaile's *Student's manual*.

Q.3 gave the candidate who had indulged in wide background reading an opportunity to gain some easy marks. Comments were called for on the importance of well-known names in the history of printing and book production. There has been a tendency to overlook this historical section of the syllabus in previous papers.

Q.4 The familiar question on linotype and monotype composition with an ingenious twist. Candidates were asked to discuss the suitability of linotype and monotype for book production, and to describe the latter process in detail. Factors such as cost, time taken, justification, type of book and the unity of the various features are involved.

Q.5 dealt with the section of the syllabus on paper-making in a similar manner. The qualities to be considered in deciding the suitability of a material for paper-making are the length of fibre, the tensile strength and the percentage of cellulose. Other factors such as cost of production and surface treatment are of secondary importance. This is a wide question and many aspects could be included. It is impossible to lay down any exact standard from these various qualities. It is a fact that two papers of exactly the same constituents may have different values when tested for breaking strain or resistance to attrition.

Q.6 What factors influence the librarian's decision when he considers the re-binding of a book? All good candidates will say the present and future demand, the condition of the book and the probable cost of replacement. The cynic will suggest that the state of the binding fund exercises an important influence in such a decision. The second part of the question on the range of binding materials is standard and is fully dealt with in Coutts & Stephens *Manual of library bookbinding*.

Q.7 asked for notes on six of ten common bibliographic terms.

Q.8 It is refreshing to see the oblique twist that the examiners give to standard questions. Number 8 is the old friend on colour illustration in book work with special reference to half-tone and collotype.

Q.9 asked for the main features of the Photostat and Copycat methods of reproduction. This type of question is a gift to the student who keeps abreast of current practice but one cannot help feeling sorry for the junior working in an isolated County branch.

Q.10 is a quotation from Esdaile stressing the importance of identifying the correct order of editions. This reduces the question to a straightforward request for the method of assigning dates to various editions.

REGISTRATION: Assistance to Readers.

A criticism has been made that the Registration Assistance to Readers paper is more difficult than its Final equivalent. It was less so on this occasion, although I, for one, should have liked to see the Q.1 and Q.3 type of question included in a Final paper. Q.1 asked for a knowledge of "the various kinds of abstracting services" and was clearly the province of the assistant in the special library, with his knowledge of Chemical Abstracts,

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Science Abstracts "A" and "B," Engineering Index (with its card service), as well as of the Royal Society's survey of this field. By "services" one presumably also means that the original article abstracted can be made available; this opens up yet another field. The word "abstract" is, of course, an anomaly. The mere title of an article is sometimes sufficient for a documentation service to operate (e.g., the D.S.I.R. *Translated Contents List*).

Q.3 called for a critical approach to some leading reference tools. In one or two cases the date of publication or period of coverage (*International Catalogue*; Palgrave) militated against usefulness; in other cases the bias or the selective nature (*Readers' Guide*; B.M. *Subject Index*) called for caution; in others, again, the arrangement (as in Bateson—and perhaps the *Subject Index* once more) provided a handicap; finally, in Grove, there is an omission which is easily repaired elsewhere: the plots of operas.

The public library assistant, thwarted by Q.1, should have been satisfied with the question on the methods of display possible in a medium-sized reference library (Q.5), and Q.10, on the preparation of a booklist in connection with the centenary of R. L. Stevenson, although the latter could have been tackled by anyone enterprising enough.

It is hoped that the table provided on page 90 of the *A.A.L. Guide*, Part 1, gave ideas for answering Q.2, which asked simply for a list of one special dictionary, one special encyclopædia, and so forth. This is the type of question which can be dealt with efficiently in a very few minutes and give the candidates every confidence.

"What type of directories should be in every general reference library?" asks Q.7. The major groups are: locality and national; trade; telephone; special (such as the *Law List*, or Crockford). Familiar reference tools were also the burden of Q.9, although, among such blameless examples as Bryan, Chaffers and Kempe appeared the name of "Foxe." Foxe—*The Book of Martyrs*? I can recall no other. Amusingly enough, neither Mudge nor Minto includes it.

REGISTRATION: Library Organization and Administration. By B. Bennett.

This paper seemed to be set out in a new form this year and classified into five sections: general, municipal, county, special and university. This offered alternative choices to students from special libraries, but although only six questions had to be answered from the twelve set, yet no group of students had, in actual fact, a particularly wide choice.

The general section of the paper was notable for the omission of any questions dealing with library law and committee procedure. A few extra questions in this section would have provided a wider choice all round. From the municipal and county point of view the paper could have been tackled fairly successfully by students with two or three years' experience without a great deal of study.

In the general section Q.1 was the functions of the Library Association as a publisher of text-books. Most of us would like to see a higher standard of book production in our text-books but presumably the financial risks are too great for the Library Association to take and for the time being we shall

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have to rely largely on the output of commercial firms. Material for answering Q.2 on the difficulties of international lending is well-provided in Mr. Pafford's book. The present political difficulties in Europe are additional factors mitigating against such co-operation. Q.3, on the functions and purposes of the three main types of library, was straight-forward, and little difficulty also should have been experienced with Q.4 on systems of book ordering. Miss Carnell and the rest of the text-books provide adequate information.

In the municipal library section Q.5 and Q.6 had certain affinities, stressing the co-operation needed between units of municipal systems. On the question of the permanent allocation of stock to branch libraries there is a great deal to be said for periodic changes of stock among smaller libraries. Readers become jaded and frustrated on seeing the same books time after time. Whilst basic stock could be permanent, the circulation of other material from branch to branch would result in fresher stocks and more satisfied readers. A running accessions number is essential for this method. The whole question is treated very forcefully by Mr. Savage in his *Manual of Book Classification and Display*. "Should a reader be compelled to return a book to the library from which he borrowed it?" was the essence of Q.6. It is obviously a nuisance as far as our rigid issue methods are concerned to allow readers to return books to their most convenient service point, but this should not deny them this facility. The issue of a temporary ticket, the discharge of the book by telephone and the conveyance of the book to its "home" library are relatively simple procedures. This is frequently done when branch libraries are closed for repairs and little dislocation or extra work results.

County library work was covered in QQ.7 and 8, one dealing with the work of the Students' Section and the other with the advantages and disadvantages of decentralization in administration. Decentralization increases as the size of the branches increases, whereas in scattered rural areas it is almost non-existent, unless the county areas are so large as to necessitate the regionalization of service.

Municipal library assistants must have been on less sure ground when tackling the questions on special libraries, QQ.9 and 10. Trade catalogues seem to demand a classified arrangement under trades with an accompanying name catalogue of firms and products. Abstracting and indexing of articles is the key to ensuring the maximum use being made of periodicals in a closed special library.

Finally there were two questions on university libraries, Q.11 on the advantages and disadvantages of open access, and Q.12 on the desirability of universities' providing all text-books used by students as is done in the United States. There can be little doubt that open access is as desirable (with adequate safeguards for rare books) in university libraries as in public libraries, particularly as the students know their precise requirements. The domestic arrangements of American universities, where the books are part of the lodgings, make their problem of book provision easier. There is much to be said for this method but the difficulties of applying it, say to London University, would involve much organisation and supervision. If it were in force it would relieve public libraries of many demands for text-

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books and also ease the financial burden of undergraduates.

REGISTRATION: History of English Literature.

The bag from which the examiners drew their questions had no objectionable secret poacher's pockets on this occasion, although the candidate certainly had to have his wits about him. Two questions were of the take-it-or-leave-it, author-and-title type. "Ayenbite of Inwyt" was almost certainly declined, probably with "The Ormulum" (an old favourite), in Q.2. Q.5 paid tribute to the wealth of fine prose produced in the seventeenth century, but I learn that students confused Fuller (*Worthies*) with Taylor (*Holy Living*); *Vulgar Errors* is the name commonly given to Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, and it explodes fancies, popular at the time, such as that elephants have no joints.

Candidates should, however, have warmed to Q.1, on Anglo-Saxon prose (not sacrificing Aelfric and Wulfstan on the altar of Alfred and the Chronicle); Q.3, on the drama up to 1590 (that is, up to, but not including, Marlowe and the University Wits); Q.4, on Shakespeare as a poet (which means rather more than an appreciation of the Sonnets plus *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*); and Q.10, on T. S. Eliot.

The development of the English novel in the eighteenth century, the subject of Q.6, means more than a following of the thread from Defoe and Addison and Steele to Richardson and Fielding; it should include the several interesting departures of the novel from the solid foundations, romantic and realistic, laid by Richardson and Fielding. The novels of Smollett and Sterne, of Fanny Burney and Godwin, and the Gothic Novel, provide themes here.

Three questions were devoted to the nineteenth century, an annual allowance. In order to examine the claims of Keats and Shelley as "exemplars" of the Romantic Movement (Q.7), we must first (briefly) state what the latter stood for, remembering that the greatest exponents of the Movement were, after all, individualists. No doubt the temptation to compare Keats and Shelley as poets and to leave it at that was too much for some.

The 1890 period (and may we not extend it here to the "eighties"?) again came up for discussion (Q.9). Oscar Wilde, the contributors to *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*, are among the "decadents," but their parodists—Calveley and Sullivan—deserve some note. Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties*, currently available as a Pelican Book, covers the period fully.

Books for Students

IRWIN Raymond, ed. *The libraries of London: seventeen lectures delivered at the University of London School of Librarianship in April, 1948.* 1949. (Library Association, 13s. 6d.; 10s. 6d. to members).

The appearance of this long-awaited volume will be welcomed by every student, for it provides up-to-date and reliable information on a number of important libraries of which it is the duty of all librarians—London and provincial—to have more than a passing knowledge. "This present work will supplement Rye's book and bring it up to date in some respects. There

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is no intention that it should replace Rye"—so says the introduction.

Much of this book is devoted to government libraries—including Mr. Francis on the British Museum, Mr. Townsend on the British Museum (Natural History), and Mr. Wheen on the Victoria and Albert—and one of the outstanding contributions is Sir Hilary Jenkinson's 37-page essay on the Public Record Office. Of the non-government libraries, Mr. Woledge writes on the British Library of Political and Economic Science, Mr. Purnell on the London Library, Mr. Hewitt on London's Law Libraries—to name only a few. It is worth paying especial attention to Mr. Stewart on the London Borough Libraries, for he has much to say on centralisation, union catalogues and stock specialisation, and to read Mr. Pafford's description of the many activities of the University of London Library, including the Travelling Libraries scheme (page 137).

Provincial librarians may well ask in what way this book concerns them: the answer is twofold. First of all, in their description of their own libraries the writers have managed to convey something of their own opinions and ideas of librarianship in general, so that one gains new spirit from the knowledge of so much good work being quietly but actively in hand; and secondly, the libraries here described are nearly all national in the sense that their services are not restricted to the population closely around them, but are available in differing degrees through the post to the whole nation; and also that every serious reader must sooner or later turn to the great national collections if he is not to foreshorten his studies.

Examination students are recommended to study the bibliography on pages 219 to 224: it contains notes of many good articles which are not generally known in the profession.

R.L.C.

Index to Progress

The Association's venture of faith in asking Mr. Walter F. Broome to produce this 16 mm. film for the Centenary has been more than justified. Some of the comments made by those who have used and seen it will give an idea of its value.

"... a first-class film ..." (John Grierson, *C.O.I. Films Division*).

"... gives a good impression ... of public library services in a dignified way and its makers can be congratulated." (*Hammersmith*).

"Subject and sound excellent" (*Isle of Wight Education Department*).

"Good enough for the commercial cinema" (*Altrincham*).

"It seemed to me the finest film I have seen on the subject" (*Montclair, U.S.A.*).

Two facts will show how much it has been appreciated; all copies are booked until the end of November and the C.O.I. have asked permission to make copies for distribution in this country and overseas.

The film may be booked (at 15s. for the first day and 2s. for each additional day) or bought outright (for 15 guineas) from the Hon. Treasurer, A.A.L., J. S. Bristow, A.L.A., Central Library, Southampton.

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Active Divisions

It has been impossible to report the many and varied activities of the Divisions since April owing to limitations of space, so I shall only mention a few of the special features that have come to my notice since then.

The North Eastern Division held a joint meeting with the Northern Branch of the L.A. at Gateshead on March 29th. Mr. Lillie, Librarian of Gateshead, based his talk on his experience of fifty years of library service and, as a member of the audience put it: "It was the expression of the faith of a librarian." It was a poignant vision of increased personal contact with readers, plus the maintaining of a high standard of culture. He stressed the value and pleasure to be found in the great literature of the past and present.

The junior meeting, which had preceded Mr. Lillie's talk, had debated the influence of the cheap thriller on modern society. While no solution was forthcoming to the present crime wave, the discussion was lively and interesting.

On the same day, the North Wales Division met at Colwyn Bay. Mr. Ifor Davies made a plea for the discursive mind in librarianship: he thought that assistants should endeavour to read widely in all fields and take an active part in the cultural and social life of the district so that the work of the library could be more closely related to the needs of the locality.

In the South East, Mr. Bickerton, of Worthing, gave a talk on the "Development of the printed book," which he illustrated with lantern slides. The main item of interest in the Spring number of the Midland Division News Sheet is an article by Doreen Wallace on "Books and you," in which she says "of all helpful, knowledgeable, encouraging people on this earth, librarians take the palm." Thank you, Miss Wallace.

From G.L.D. comes news of a most successful trip to Paris at Whitsun, where visits were made to the Bibliothèque Nationale and several other libraries. Another new venture for G.L.D. was a mid-week school held at Wansfell Residential College in Essex—29 were in residence for 4 days, lectures by day and films in the evening including "Index to Progress."

The A.A.L. film seems to have been shown around the Divisions generally and to have been favourably received. It was linked with a lecture by Mr. Irwin at Loughborough on "Some thoughts on the Centenary"—did you know that the P.L. movement can be claimed to be the first of the welfare services, preceding compulsory education by 20 years?

Divisions seem to have been inviting the archivists to address them—Liverpool and District listened to the City Archivist of Chester, and Yorkshire were to have had the Hon. Archivist of York but, as he was ill, Miss Brunskill, Assistant Librarian of York Minster, deputised.

The North Western Newsletter has again provided most invigorating reading with a couple of articles on attendance, or lack of it, at meetings, the B.N.B. in practice at Manchester and the usual reports of meetings.

Finally from the South Eastern Division comes a foretaste of the future in a paper, "The next 100 years of librarianship"—jet helicopters for inter-library loans, anti-theft light rays and television from library to borrower.

G.P.R.